

Message Text

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NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY

FOLLOWING REPEAT LISBON 4551 ACTION SECSTATE AUG 11.

QUOTE: S E C R E T LISBON 4551

NODIS

PLEASE PASS TO WHITE HOUSE FOR GENERAL SCOWCROFT

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PO

SUBJECT: APPROACH TO ANTUNES

REFS: (A) WH-51464 AUG 10, (B) LISBON 4539, (C) STATE 189204

1. PURSUANT INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED REF A, I MET WITH COMMANDER ANTONIO JOSE FERREIRA, AT 5:20 A.M. LOCAL AUGUST 11. FERREIRA, ANTUNES'S PRINCIPAL PERSONAL AIDE AND FORMER CHIEF OF CABINET AT FONMIN, CAME TO MY HOUSE TOGETHER WITH ASSISTANT NAVAL ATTACHE RYAN.

2. FERREIRA CAME IN PLACE OF ANTUNES BECAUSE, AS HE EXPLAINED, ANTUNES FEELS HE CANNOT HAVE A DIRECT CONTACT AT PRESENT. I TOLD FERREIRA THAT I UNDERSTOOD ANTUNES'S POSITION.

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AT SAME TIME I TOLD HIM THAT I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL

FOR US TO GET TOGETHER PERSONALLY WHEN ANTUNES DEEMED IT OPPORTUNE TO DO SO. I TOLD FERREIRA THAT I WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ANTUNES ANY TIME OR PLACE AT HIS CONVENIENCE. FERREIRA SAID HE THOUGHT THAT ANTUNES WOULD BE PREPARED TO HAVE A DIRECT MEETING WHEN THE SITUATION CLARIFIED SOMEWHAT AROUND HIS MANIFESTO. HE ADDED THAT VITOR ALVES OR CRESPO WOULD HAVE COME IN ANTUNES'S PLACE, BUT BOTH WERE OUT OF LISBON LAST NIGHT.

3. I PASSED INFORMATION CONTAINED PARA 2 REF A TO FERREIRA. ADDITIONALLY I TOLD HIM THAT THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY WERE BOTH FOLLOWING PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS VERY CLOSELY, AND THAT ANTUNES SHOULD UNDERSTAND HE HAD US SUPPORT. HE GOT THE POINT, ASKED NO QUESTIONS RE OFFER OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT, AND SAID HE WOULD RELAY INFO TO ANTUNES SOONEST. WE CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT HE WILL DO SO.

4. I ASKED FERREIRA HOW MATTERS STOOD AT THE MOMENT. HE SAID THE MILITARY WERE LINING UP SOLIDLY BEHIND THE ANTUNES MANIFESTO: 85-90 PERCENT OF MILITARY UNITS SUPPORTED IT; THE NORTHERN MILITARY REGION WAS COMPLETELY BEHIND IT (MINUS CORVACHO, THE REGIONAL COMMANDER); THE CENTER AND SOUTHERN REGIONS, AS WELL AS PORTUGUESE MILITARY UNITS IN ANGOLA, SUPPORTED THE MANIFESTO. ACCORDING TO FERREIRA, THE SERVICE BREAKDOWN IS FOLLOWING: THE ARMY AND AIR FORCE ARE SOLIDLY BEHIND THE MANIFESTO, THE NAVY LESS SO. I ASKED HIM WHERE FABIAO AND OTELO STOOD. HE ASID THAT OTELO WAS STILL PLAYING HIS DOUBLE ROLE -- OVERTLY NEUTRAL/NEGATIVE, BUT PASSING THE WORD QUIETLY THAT HE SUPPORTS THE MANIFESTO. FABIAO, WHEN ASKED TO SIGN, HAD SAID THAT HE "DID NOT WANT TO BE THE FIRST" BUT, ACCORDING TO FERREIRA, SUPPORTS ANTUNES.

5. I ASKED FERREIRA FOR HIS READING ON ATTITUDES OF ENLISTED MEN. HE RESPONDED THAT THE BULK OF THE ENLISTED MEN SUPPORTED THE ANTUNES MANIFESTO, THAT THEY TOO WERE TIRED OF THE CURRENT MESS, AND THAT THEY WERE FED UP WITH BEING PLACED IN A REPRESSIVE ROLE.

6. FERREIRA STRESSED ANTUNES'S HOPE THAT HE COULD COME TO POWER WITHOUT VIOLENCE. HE REPEATEDLY STATED THAT ANTUNES HOPED THERE WOULD BE NO SHOOTING. I ASKED HIM WHO, ON THE OTHER

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SIDE, WOULD DO THE SHOOTING IF IT CAME TO THAT. HE SAID THAT THE MARINES MIGHT, AS AN "ACT OF DESPERATION." IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY, HE DISMISSED RALIS (LEFTIST LISBON ARTILLERY REGIMENT) AS A FACTOR, IF MATTERS CAME TO A VIOLENT SHOWDOWN.

7. I ASKED FERREIRA WHAT ANTUNES EXPECTS TO HAPPEN NEXT. HE SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD HAVE TO RECONSIDER HIS DECISION TO RETAIN GONCALVES AND HIS GROUP. ANTUNES EXPECTS THIS TO

HAPPEN AS IT BECOMES CLEAR HOW MUCH SUPPORT MANIFESTO HAS WITHIN THE MILITARY.

8. I ASKED FERREIRA WHETHER ANTUNES AND HIS GROUP WERE FULLY COMMITTED TO GOING ALL THE WAY. TOLD HIM THIS WAS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT SEEMED CLEAR TO ME THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO COMPROMISE WITH THE GONCALVES/COMMUNIST FACTION WAS BOTH HOPELESS AND HARMFUL. FERREIRA SAID THIS WAS ANTUNES'S ANALYSIS AS WELL, THAT HIS GROUP WAS ANTI-COMMUNIST. HE SAID WISTFULLY THAT WHAT THE ANTUNES GROUP WANTED WAS AN EASTERN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM WITH WESTERN EUROPEAN LIBERTIES AND TIES. I TOLD FERREIRA THAT THEY COULD NEVER HAVE WESTERN EUROPEAN LIBERTIES WITH THE PCP IN A COMMANDING POSITION. I ASKED HIM WHETHER THE ANTUNES GROUP REALIZED THAT CUNHAL WAS AIMING AT A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER A LA EASTERN EUROPE. FERREIRA SAID THIS WAS NOW CLEAR TO THEM, THAT PREVIOUSLY "WE WERE VERY NAIVE."

9. FERREIRA STRESSED SEVERAL TIMES ANTUNES'S DEEP CONCERN THAT ANY ACTIVITY BY ELP OR OTHER RIGHTIST MANIFESTATIONS, WOULD BE EXTREMELY HARMFUL. (HE DID NOT EXPLICITLY MENTION SPINOLA OR AZOREANS, BUT ALMOST CERTAINLY HE HAD THEM IN MIND AS WELL.)

10. DURING MEETING, WHICH LASTED HALF AN HOUR, FERREIRA WAS COMPOSED AND CALM -- BUT OBVIOUSLY UNDER STRESS. HE CARRIED AN AUTOMATIC PISTOL, WHICH IS NOW SOP FOR HIM.

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